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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Senate Bill 809 – Supporting Our Caregiver Infrastructure Program - Feasibility Study**

March 11, 2026

Madame Chair and Members of the Finance Committee:

In a study done by AARP, about one in four Maryland adults are providing care to a family member or close friend. That same study estimates that they contribute 710 million hours of unpaid care annually. Along with the physical and emotional toll of caregiving, unpaid care has a real fiscal impact on caregivers.

Senate Bill 809 is a first step to understanding the fiscal impact of caring for a family member and how we might better support our caregivers. As originally drafted, the Comptroller's Office, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Aging, the Department of Health and local agencies on aging and disabilities, are charged with conducting a study to examine the economic impact of unpaid caregivers.

After many discussions with the Comptroller's Office and others, it was determined that the University of Maryland is in the best position with the best resources to conduct this study, so I am offering an amendment to make that change.

The bill as amended requires the University of Maryland, with assistance from the Department of Human Services, to study and make recommendations on the feasibility of establishing and operating a Caregiver Infrastructure Program in which the Program would provide universal monthly payments to caregivers for each dependent they care for. This bill recognizes the reality that families across Maryland live with every day - that caregivers are holding our long-term care system together.

The University will examine the economic impact on State and local economies, including potential increases in labor force participation, enhanced tax revenues, and an exploration of stipend levels that can maximize economic benefit while minimizing fiscal impact. The Department of Human Services will identify funding options, administrative needs, and costs, in consultation with key State and local partners. The bill also sets a clear timeline, with a final report due July 1, 2028, and a sunset date that keeps this effort focused and accountable.

Caregivers face financial strain, lost work hours, and tough choices that ripple through household stability and our broader economy. Senate Bill 809 with amendments is a necessary step in understanding the fiscal impacts of caregiving and how we can provide better support, and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 809.